



Nikole and Matt have been foster parents since April 2005. Nikole is a special education teacher who is currently working with early childhood children. She is also currently taking classes. Matt is a full-time firefighter and EMT. He is also going to school to become a paramedic. He continues to run a small landscaping business.

Nikole and Matt decided to become foster parents because they both love kids and recognized there was a need for foster parents. Since becoming foster parents, Nikole and Matt have had 2 placements.

Words of Wisdom for new foster parents "Be consistent, firm, and fair, results are sure to follow. Develop a good working relationship with the social worker and have lots of communication with the social worker".

When asked if they found PACE training to be helpful they replied it helped them to think about and internalize things that we were already aware of. They feel all parents should have to take a class that is similar.

### **Contact Numbers:**

Waukesha H & HS 262-548-7212

Eve Altizer Children's Mental Health Outreach 262-548-7310

Crisis Mentoring Pager 414-848-6711

Medical Emergency; 911 Family Emergency: 211

Judy David Support Group President 414-671-3747 (home) 414-462-8446

Lisa Alden, Supervisor 262-548-7271

Shari Rather Foster Care Coordinator 262-548-7267

Amber Sparks Visitation Coordinator 262-896-6849

### Dec. '05 Placements

Regular Foster Care:

62 Children

1 Admitted

Treatment Foster Care:

31 Children

7 Children

1 Admitted

1 Admitted

3 Discharged

Relative Placements:

35 Children

3 Admitted

4 Discharged

2 Admitted

1 Discharged

Group Homes:

1 Discharged

Residential Care Facilities:

8 Children

4 Discharged

### **Social Workers:**

**Bob Alioto** 

262-548-7262

Peggy Beisser

262-548-7261 Kathe Blum

262-548-7275

Barb Hufschmidt

262-548-7270 Margaret Johnson

262-548-7265

Suzanne Koberstein

262-548-7348

Elizabeth Russo 262-548-7349

Kim Sampson

262-548-7273

Linda Senger

262-548-7698 Marilyn Vidergar

262-548-7363

Ted Wuerslin 262-548-7269

Jennifer Wygle

262-548-7260

### We Need You!

For more information about becoming a foster parent in Waukesha County, please contact Shari Rather at:

srather@waukeshacounty.gov 262-548-7267

or visit our website at www.waukeshacounty.gov and follow the links to

foster care.



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via e-mail instead of mail? Please e-mail: srather@waukeshacounty.gov to complete this request. You can also find it online at www.waukeshacounty.gov.

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# Foster Care Forum

# Fostering... If I Only Had Known An excerpt from the book Parenting Someone Else's Child by Ann Stressman

In an attempt to prepare you for both the bad and the good, I'd like to give you a clearer picture of what may be coming down the road on this great adventure of being a Foster Parent!

There are certain behaviors common to many foster children. Your licensing worker should go over them with you and ask which ones you absolutely cannot live with. This will help them know which types of children not to place in your home.

- History of lying
- History of stealing
- Acting out before and after visits to bio-home
- Making virtually no effort to connect with family where one is living
- Damaging one's home
- Not taking care of possessions
- Eating far too much junk food/sugar • Poor grammar, reading, spelling
- Behind in school, at least one grade
- Pattern of defiance
- Hyperactivity
- Bedwetting
- Poor manners Poor hygiene
- Inappropriate behavior in public
- Pattern of running away
- History of violence
- History of arson
- · History of being abused

There are many more things that some foster children do. but the licensor should show this list to you and you

should decide between you and your spouse if you want to handle these kind of troubled children. In addition, your training classes should give you some ideas to utilize when dealing with these problems. Don't be afraid to ask questions and don't be afraid to refuse certain kinds of children. There are lots and lots of kids out there who need homes, and they need all different kinds of parents. You will be able to fill the need in some way.

No one will be upset with you - and you needn't feel guilty in the slightest - if you decline to take a violent child, a fire-setter, or a child who has sexually abused others.

Let the more experienced foster parents deal with these kids, or let the institutions handle them. Don't destroy your own family by overloading yourself from the very beginning.

I used to get very nervous when the foster care worker came out to visit the child. In my state there's a requirement that every worker visit every child in the the foster home at least once per month. I always worried about the messy house and what my foster child

said to the worker when they were talking privately. But one day about 10 years into the game I learned a very important truth: They need you! Without foster homes, they have no jobs! Without foster homes, there would be no kids to worry about! And they know you are just an average human, with faults and assets, and they won't worry about such little things as a dirty house - unless it's a danger to a child because it is so dirty or unhealthy.

The child may say you yell at him. So? Most parents do! If the child alleges cruelty or physical harm, you should worry, but unless you do that, why would the child say it? At any rate. most social workers learn very quickly the things children say that are true and those that are manipulative and

Remember to document everything. Any paperwork you can give the caseworker will be of assistance to him/her in writing that report. It could also help you. Many states rate the amount of subsidy you get according to the level of difficulty of the child. If you don't' document problems, defiance, number of calls from the school, and so on, you may not get the additional subsidy you should have coming to you.

This, and more great topics are covered in Ann Stressman's Book, Parenting Somebody Else's Child.

### Jesse's Corner Division know we participated in the State of Wisconsin Quality Service Review (QSR) the week of December 5th. I'd like to thank all the foster parents, youth in foster care, our contracted and community providers, staff, supervisors and all who participated! We had 75 people participate in our Focus Groups including frontline workers & supervisors, service providers, foster parents, foster youth, legal Judge, Commissioner, Corporation Counsel and Guardian at Litems (GAL) and the management staff. Some comments from the focus groups included:

- "Chronic AODA and MH problems in the family lead to Termination of Parental Right's (TPR). Most TPR's are uncontested. Permanency is happening faster now for kids"
- PACE Training for foster parents is great!"
- Prevention and early intervention pays off in the end but cost more up front"

Overall Child & Family Status: 100%; Overall Practice Performance: 75% and Six-Month Prognosis: 100%.

Our Department has created a QSR Steering Committee to implement Next Step Actions. I will be the chairperson of this committee and will follow up on any recommendations. We welcome any suggestions you may have to improve our practice. Please feel free to contact Shari Rather or your social worker with any suggestions. I'd be more than happy to review the results of the QSR (power point presentation) if you would like. Please contact Shari and let her know. If we get enough interest we'll set up a time and place in the near future.

On a related matter, as of 1/1/06, we will no longer schedule or have administrative reviews. Instead cases will be reviewed in juvenile court as Judicial Hearings/Reviews. We will be following the same out of home placement timelines as before. We'll keep you aware of the process and inform you of any changes. If you have any specific questions or concerns please contact your social worker. Since this is the end of a 25 year working relationship with Family Services of Waukesha, I would like to thank their agency, especially Laura Cherone (facilitator) and all the volunteer panel members for their dedication and support for the last 25 years or so! THANK YOU!

### Social Worker Spotlight

### Margaret Johnson



1. Personal Information: (marriage, kids, pets, hobbies)

I am married with one child. I have one dog. I've been married II ½ years- I married my high school sweetheart. I am from Eau Claire, and moved to Milwaukee to go to UWM (go Panther's). My hobbies include helping

my husband with remodeling/construction projects; playing with my son; gardening; spending time with family.

- 2.Educational Background: (university attended and degree earned) I have a Bachelors Degree in Social Welfare from UWM. I graduated in 1995. I am certified/licensed by the State of WI.
- 3. Work Experience: (length at Waukesha, how long working as a social worker, areas worked in)

I started in Ongoing Foster Care Social worker in 1995- until Jan. 1998. I worked for the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare from Jan 98-Feb 2000; I then worked for Milwaukee County DHS Adoption Unit from Feb 00 to Aug. 02 when I was laid off due to Milwaukee. Co. DHS exiting the child welfare system in Milwaukee. Co. I worked at Penfield Children's Center as a Birth to Three Service Coordinator from Aug. 02- Oct. 03. Then I started here.

- 4. What brings you the greatest joy as a social worker? Why did you become a social worker? Sometimes it is difficult to find joy in this particular part of social work. It is always wonderful when a family can be
- social work. It is always wonderful when a family can be reunited. I have come to appreciate and never under-estimate a child's love and loyalty to their biological family. I don't always understand it, but you can't ignore it. It can also be joyful when children do find permanence through adoption. Joyful that the children will have a permanent family and place to live, where they feel they belong; not joyful that the biological family has been terminated, but I always try to find the good in situations, and sometimes the greater good is in adoption. The children's best interests must be held as the most important priority. I became a social worker to help families and children. I appreciate the upbringing I had, and I felt that I could help people achieve what they wanted. I also wanted to protect children from bad situations and show them there are good people in the world that they can trust.
- 5. Any additional comments that may help a family interested in foster care. (anecdote, helpful info, etc.) Please know your limits. I know it is difficult to say no to a worker when we call looking for an emergency placement, but it will only create bad situations for everyone down the road when a foster parent tries to take on too much. Everyone suffers, including the kids.

# The Kid Prints Year End Contest Winner was **Zaw!**



Zaw's artwork and award has been framed and a \$50 check has been sent in your name courtesy of Pellegrini Design!

### **Ongoing Training**

Understanding and Building
Attachment
& Shared Parenting

Saturday, March 25, 2006 9:00am to 4:00pm Registration is at 8:30

Where: Center of Excellence across the Street from Sam's Club in Waukesha

Child care will be provided if needed, please call Shari Rather to arrange for this at 262-548-7267.

Understanding and Building Attachment
This workshop focuses on the initiation
and development of attachment in children
and is designed for licensed foster caregivers with placement experience.

## Waukesha County Department of Human Services Presents the Winter Session of PACE Training 2006

February 2, 2006 Teambuilding

February 2, 2006 6:15 pm to 9:15 pm

February 4. 2006

Child Abuse and Neglect

8:30 am to 11:30 am 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm Child I

Child Development

February 18, 2006 8:30 am to 11:30 am

Attachment, Separation, and Placement

8:30 am to 11:30 am 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm

Discipline and Behavior Management

Cultural Issues in Placement

March 4, 2006 8:30 am to 11:30 am 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm

Primary Families

12:30 pm to 3:30 pm

March 18, 2006

12:30 pm to 3:30 pm

March 18, 2006 Sexual Abuse 8;30 am to 11:30 am

Effects of Care-giving on the Family

April 1, 2006 8:30 am to 11:30 am 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm Permanency Issues for Children

Permanency Issues for Families

All classes will be held at Waukesha County Department of Health and Human Services located at 500 Riverview Avenue in Waukesha. Class size is limited to 24. Please call to register: 262-548-7267.

Stenger Solutions has sponsored the printing of this newsletter!